

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO. *W/AF*

COUNTRY Guatemala

DATE DISTR. 13 Aug 51

SUBJECT Closing Session of the
Transportation Conference

NO. OF PAGES 3

PLACE 25X1A

NO. OF ENCLS.

ACQUIRED [REDACTED]

(LISTED BELOW)

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1. On 13 May 1951 between nine and twelve o'clock in the evening, the closing session of the transportation conference was held in Guatemala City. About six hundred persons were present; stage decorations were approximately the same as for the opening session; guests of honor on the stage were representatives and delegates of the Federacion Sindical Mundial (FSM), the Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina (CTAL), and the Guatemalan transportation unions. Not one high government functionary was identified among those present.
2. The opening speaker was Virgilio Guerra, Salvadoran, an official of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Guatemala (CTG) and Secretary General of the Wood and Glass Union, who pronounced the "palabras de clausura."
3. The second speaker was the Chilean member of the Chilean workers' confederation, Luis E. Sandoval, who referred to the success of the conference, and then spoke of the pressure being exerted upon the working class in Chile by the Chilean Government. He blamed the troubles of his confederation on imperialism in Chile. He said that in spite of everything, the Chilean workers were supporting all CTAL and FSM resolutions and were continuing to struggle for political, social, and economic independence.
4. Renato da Motta, Brazilian, member of the Brazilian workers' confederation, spoke in Portuguese. He first thanked the Guatemalan people for their courteous reception of him. He then described the form and development of the Brazilian labor movement and pledged unconditional support to the FSM and the CTAL.
5. The next speaker was Maurice Carroue of France, vice-president of the Agricultural and Forestry Workers' International Trade Union. He began his speech with a history of the FSM since 1920. He referred to the role of French labor in the Second World War, and spoke of the forces of labor unification operating in France since 1939, blaming present labor troubles on United States' instigation of the Third World War. He praised the important contribution to peace being made by French transportation workers in blocking by any means at hand the delivery of war materiel to Indo-China or other war theatres. Carroue assured Guatemala that the French people were pacifistic and making every effort to block imperialist attempts to cause the "new war." He said they were opposed to the manufacture of war materials, preferring to produce materials that assured peace. Carlos Manuel Pellecer translated Carroue's speech from French into Spanish, as he had done at the opening session for Louis Saillant.

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6. The fifth speaker was Vicente Lombardo Toledano, who began by calling the occasion an unforgettable one for Guatemalan labor because the conference was closing with all preparations completed for the unification of the farm and worker movements into a single organization (central unica) in spite of the efforts of U.S. imperialists to discredit and defame the work. Lombardo seconded the words of Louis Saillant in reassuring the workers of Guatemala at this moment, on the threshold of their battle, that they were supported by thousands and thousands of workers everywhere in the world. He reminded the workers of their responsibilities to the organization of the new worker-farmer central, the success of which depended upon each and every worker and farmer. He denied that this organization was a plot against the government and the people of Guatemala, but rather that it was indispensable for the conquest of all workers' rights, such as the right of assembly, freedom of speech, the right to strike, and so forth. He closed by proposing cheers: "Viva la Central Unica de Guatemala"; "Viva la CTAL"; and "Viva la FSM."

7. Virgilio Guerra announced that Victor Manuel Gutierrez had an important notice to give the Guatemalan workers. Gutierrez then stated that at an extraordinary session attended by the CTAL and FSM representatives and by twenty-eight delegates from the executive committees of farmer and worker unions, it had been definitely decided to create "la Central Sindical Unica de Guatemala," and that organization was beginning immediately to plan a general assembly to be attended by all workers of Guatemala from which would be chosen the officers of the Central Unica.

8. Virgilio Guerra then returned to announce the final part of the last session of the conference and to read messages of congratulation signed by Luis Cardoza y Aragon and by the Executive Committee of the Alianza de la Juventud Democratica Guatemalteca (AJDG). He announced that by the end of next July the pro-peace committee would send over one hundred thousand signatures for peace to the Stockholm appeal. He also announced the World Congress of Democratic Youth to be held beginning on 20 August in Berlin, for which a delegation from the AJDG was being selected.

9. The final speaker was Louis Saillant, who talked of the need for unity, and cited the Spanish Republican strike in Nationalist Spain, saying that everyone knew how the strikers had unified their efforts against Franco. He said everyone knew how much sacrifice the Republican comrades had made in order to consolidate their forces, and that now, happily, they were on the point of overthrowing Franco. He thought that everyone wished that the Spanish Republicans could soon lower the Nationalist flag and raise the red banner of the Republicans. Saillant then advised the workers to use care in constructing the organization of what he called the "Central Unica de Trabajadores de Guatemala," since they would have to fight constantly against divisionists, without fear, and with faith in the ultimate victory of the world organization.

10. Saillant, Carroué, and Lombardo Toledano departed for Mexico City via PAA Flight No. 502 on 14 May 1951. It was not learned whether Fernandez, Guzman, and Ramirez also returned to Mexico City.

11. The activities of the six sessions of the Transport Conference were summarized [REDACTED]: the conference accomplished two main objectives: a) the decision was reached to form a "Central Unica" for Guatemalan labor, and b) plans were made to organize a new political labor party based on the Partido Revolucionario Obrero de Guatemala (PRCG).

12. The fourth session was held on 11 May 1951, and was the first formal work session. Invited delegates, representatives, and executive committees of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Guatemala (CTG), the Federacion Sindical de Guatemala (FSG), and the Federacion Regional Central de Trabajadores de Guatemala (FRCTG) attended. Only the secretaries-general of the executive committees had voices or votes. The pre-conference agenda were considered and accord was voted. The following points on the agenda were considered:

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- a. Guarantees of workers' rights should be sought from management and government in Central and Latin America.
- b. Labor contracts should be planned and formulated.
- c. The right to strike should be recognized internationally.
- d. Trade hazards should be recognized.
- e. The right to assemble and form unions should be recognized nationally and internationally.
- f. Social security should be made to cover all transport workers in the Western Hemisphere.
- g. Paid vacations, better salaries, education, and better shelter should be demanded.
- h. Mutual co-operation among all transportation workers in Latin America and the world should be attained.
- i. Leave plans settled for the unification of all Guatemalan workers.

13. Points c, e, and g were especially emphasized. Point h was extended to include affording means of travel to each worker to any place, thus facilitating the interchange of ideas and strengthening the world labor unification movement. Point i was considered at the fifth session.

14. The fifth session was held on 12 May, and the representatives of executive and political committees of the confederations and principal syndicate affiliates attended. Among others, the representatives of the Sindicato de Accion y Mejoramiento Ferrocarrilero (SAIF) stood out prominently. Point i of the agenda was acted upon.

15. During the day of 13 May, visiting delegates and representatives were taken to visit Atitlan and Antigua, Guatemala. Maurice Carroux and Leonardo Castillo Flores visited the south coast and the agricultural zones of Esquitla. On 14 May 1951, the FSI and CIL representatives departed for Mexico City.

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